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REGIME SURVIVAL STRATEGIES AND THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY IN EGYPT

エジプトにおける体制維持戦略と外交政策

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エジプトではムバーラク大統領の国内政策と域内におけるエジプトの影響力低迷が引き金となって、2011 年 1 月 25 日に抗議運動起こった。抗議運動はエジプト全土に拡がり、18 日間の民衆的な反体制運動によってムバーラクは軍に見捨てられ、失脚に追い込まれた。この民衆蜂起によって警察は街頭から撤退し、シナイ半島の警察署は焼き放たれ、ムバーラクが率いていた国民民主党の建物や国内治安機関の本部は襲撃され、国家機関が数ヶ月にもわたって機能不全となり、ムバーラク体制の崩壊は国内的な混乱を招くこととなった。振り返れば、エジプトでの政治的大変動は社会的な革命へと展開することはできなかった。その理由は独裁体制からの移行を先導できる組織化された反体制勢力が存在しなかったためである。民衆による抗議運動は一時的に体制を転覆できても旧体制のエリートを分裂させることはできず、軍の影響下にある体制の復活を防ぐこともできなかった。

2011 年以降のエジプトは現在まで混乱状態に陥ったままであるが、1 カ月に及ぶエジプト軍最高評議会(SCAF)の暫定統治、エジプト史上初の自由な大統領選挙によって選出された文民大統領のムルスィーによる一年余りの統治、そして 2013 年 7 月の軍事クーデターによって権力の座に就いたスィースィーの統治といった過程で、民衆蜂起がエジプトの外交関係に及ぼした影響はごく僅かであった。本稿は、現在のエジプトの外交政策が 2011 年の革命にほとんど影響を受けていないのはなぜか、またエジプトの統治者たちが政権の正統性、体制の強化および政治的な安定性を確保し、国内的な課題に対処するための戦略をいかに策定しているのかを説明することを試みる。本稿での主張は、ムバーラク以降のエジプトが体制の強化と保全のために外交政策を進めており、国内的な混乱によって地域内アクターへの依存度が高まっていることである。

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Introduction

On 25 January 2011, mass protests erupted, fuelled by grievances over President Hosni Mubarak's domestic policies and Egypt's declining role in regional politics. Eighteen days of nationwide, united anti-regime opposition compelled the military to abandon Mubarak. His overthrow ushered in revolutionary upheaval as the popular uprising shattered state institutions when the despised police withdrew from the streets, with their stations in Sinai burned to the ground, and the buildings of Mubarak's National Democratic Party and the headquarters of the State Security Investigation agency and Interior Ministry were stormed and set ablaze.[1] In retrospect, the upheaval was unable to advance towards political or social revolution. There was no organized opposition force to lead a transition from authoritarian rule. The popular protests also did not cause splits among the old elites or prevent the military backed rule from re-reasserting itself.

Thus the uprising had little impact on Egypt's foreign relations under the 18-month interim rule of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the year-long administration of the first democratically elected civilian president Muhammad Morsi, and now under Abdul Fattah al-Sisi who came to power through a military coup in July 2013. This paper aims to explain why Egypt's 2011 revolution had little impact on its foreign policy and how domestic actors formulated external strategies expected to ensure regime legitimacy, regime consolidation, political stability, and face domestic challenges. The paper argues that post-Mubarak Egypt increasingly pursued foreign policy for regime security and consolidation and that Egypt's dependence on regional actors dramatically increased due to its internal turmoil.

Egypt's Evolving Foreign Policy

The principal objective of a state's foreign policy is to protect the sovereignty and national security of the state and maximize its vital regional and international interests.[2] As such, foreign policy should primarily be concerned with two things, namely, the sources that could challenge national security, and the ways in which foreign policy can be used to protect national and international interests. In the case of Egypt, foreign policy had to follow certain dictates because of historical and geostrategic considerations.[3] For instance, Egypt heavily depends on the Nile River which originates outside its borders and forms the basis of its agricultural sector. The Nile flows from south to north but the winds blow from north to south enabling sailing in the other

[1] Salwa Ismail. 2012. "The Egyptian Revolution Against the Police," *Social Research* 79 (2): 435-462.
[2] Brian C. Schmidt. 2012. "The Primacy of National Security," in Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dunne (eds.), *Foreign Policy, Theories, Actors, Cases*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[3] Mohamed Hassanein Heikal. July 1978. "Egyptian Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, 56 (4).

direction so that the Nile unites Egypt, as it were.[4] To protect the flow of the Nile, Egypt's foreign policy has had to take into account a major geographic challenge that extends beyond its narrow Nile corridor. Hence, Egypt must crucially keep leverage over its southern border in order to maintain its supplies of water.[5] The other major geostrategic consideration stems from the Levant and the Sinai Peninsula which was long the overland route of foreign invasion. Just as all imperial powers had to control the Levant to maintain their power in Egypt, so Egyptian policymakers regard the Levant as vital to Egypt's sovereignty and regional interests. When Muhammad Ali Pasha ruled over a strong Egypt (from 1805 to 1848), his army reached the modern border of Turkey, seized control of Northern Sudan, and created a strong sphere of influence over the Levant and Egypt's southern border.[6] This kind of geostrategic calculation partly accounted for Egypt's engagement in the Arab-Israeli conflict even under monarchical rule.

1. Egypt under Nasser (1953-1970)

Historically, Egypt took a radical turn in its foreign policy when King Farouk I, who reigned from 1936, was overthrown by a military coup in 1952, an event that completed a process of independence from Great Britain. That anti-monarchical coup was one result of the defeat of the Egyptian and Arab armies in the Arab-Israeli War in 1948.[7] Since then, anti-imperialism, opposition towards-Israel, pan-Arabism and the issue of Palestine have stayed at the top of Egypt's foreign policy agenda.

Under Gamal Abdul Nasser's rule (1954-1970), Egypt, the Arab world's biggest country was also its most influential. In the *Philosophy of the Revolution*, Nasser based Egypt's foreign policy upon three circles, namely the Arab, Islamic and the African. Under his rule, Egypt was free of foreign domination.[8] The East and West competed against each other to arm Egypt's military and build its industry. Egypt's power expanded into the Levant (culminating with the formation of the United Arab Republic between Syria and Egypt 1958-1961) and Africa (Egypt's support for liberation

[4] Fekri A. Hassan. June 1997. "The Dynamics of a Riverine Civilization: A Geoarchaeological Perspective on the Nile Valley, Egypt," *World Archaeology* 29 (1): Reverine Archaelogy: 51-74.
[5] Bonaya Adhi Godana. 1985. *Africa's Shared Water Resources: Legal and Institutional Aspects of the Nile, Niger, and Senegal River Systems*, London: France Printer; Hamdy A. Hassan and Ahmad al-Rasheedy. 2007. "The Nile River and Egyptian Foreign Policy Interests," *African Sociological Review*, 11 (1): 25-37.
[6] Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot. 1984. *Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali*, New York: Cambridge University Press; Latifa Mohamed Salem. 27 Oct.- 2 Nov. 2005. "Levantine Experiences," *Ahram Weekly:* http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/766/sc1.htm; Henry Dodwell. 1967. *The Founder of Modern Egypt*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[7] Said K. Aburish. 2004. *Nasser: The Last Arab*, New York: St. Martin's Press; Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim (eds). 2001. *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, NY: Cambridge University Press:170.
[8] Gamal Abdel-Nasser. 1954. *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, Cairo: Information Dept., U.A.R.

movements through trade and political treaties) further than anytime since Muhammad Ali.

But Nasser also actively used foreign policy to bolster his legitimacy, divert attention from domestic problems and contain his political opponents, mainly the Islamist movement. The Nasserist linkage of domestic and international politics was perhaps characteristic of governments which equated their survival with national security[9] and thereby 'securitized' the challenge of internal opposition, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood, that typically contained the most salient threat to regime survival.[10]

Nasser's policy of pan-Arab Nationalism brought Egypt a dominant role in Arab politics and gained his regime a high level of popular support across the region. He rallied Egyptians behind his anti-imperialist policies and defended Egypt's sovereignty by playing a leading role in the Non-Aligned Movement after the 1955 Bandung Conference, and nationalizing the Suez Canal in 1956 that led to military confrontation with European powers and Israel. With heightened legitimacy and popularity, he led the Arab world and the developing world and actively supported Arab states in their wars against Israel and in their struggle for independence.

The contest between Nasser's Egypt (Arab republics) and Saudi Arabia (Western backed Arab monarchies) revolved around the survival of various regimes.[11] Nasser actively tried to export socialism and Arab nationalism to the Arab world. In this connection, in 1962 Nasser sent the Egyptian army into Yemen to help Yemeni army officers stage a coup against their monarchy and establish an Egyptian-style republic.[12] Nasser's suspicion of the intentions of Western governments in the Arab world, and his rivalry with Saudi Arabia, Egypt's main adversary, led him to craft an aggressive foreign policy that championed Palestinian rights and advocated the destruction of Israel. Being the most powerful and influential Arab leader and needing to advance Egypt's role as the leader of the Arab world led Nasser to confront Israel militarily. On June 5, 1967, however, Israel attacked Egypt and destroyed most of its air force. From this 'Six-Day War', or *al-Naksa*, the catastrophe, as the Arabs called it, Israel seized the Sinai Peninsula. That defeat marked the beginning of the decline of Nasser's Arab socialist regime in Egypt, and of Egypt's influence in the Arab world and beyond. The 1967 War exposed the shortcomings of Nasser's foreign policy. His military intervention in Yemen cost Egypt heavily and overstretched his army while his reliance on Soviet intelligence

[9] Raymond Hinnebusch & Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds). 2014. *The Foreign Policy of Middle East States*, Lynne Rienner.
[10] Mohammed Zahid. 2010. *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's Succession Crisis*, London: Tauris Academic Studies: 77.
[11] Joseph Mann. 2012. "King Faisal and the Challenge of Nasser's Revolutionary Ideology," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 48 (5): 749-764.
[12] Abd al-Aziz al-Muqalih. 1986. *Abdel Nasser and Yemen: Chapters from the History of the Yemeni Revolution* (in Arabic), Dar al-Hadatha.

to deter an Israeli attack proved to be disastrous.[13] Indeed, Nasser's failure paved the way for an eventual pro-Western reorientation of Egypt's foreign policy.

To counter Nasserism in the Arab world, Saudi Arabia advanced a pan-Islamic foreign policy.[14] Among others, Saudi Arabia provided refuge and patronage to many members of the Nasser-persecuted Muslim Brotherhood and used them to denounce and delegitimize Nasser's hegemony and secularism.[15] After the mid 1950s, the oil boom in Saudi Arabia spurred modernization that was a boon for Egyptian educators among whom were a sizable number of Muslim Brothers. As Gilles Kepels rightly notes, the Brotherhood "played an influential role at the University of Medina, completed in 1961, where the doctrine of the Brothers was taught to students from all over the Muslim world."[16] The alliance with the Brotherhood enhanced Saudi Arabia's Islamic legitimacy and bought greater influence over Arab politics. Later the Saudi-Brotherhood relations helped Nasser's successor, Sadat, to defeat the Nasserists in Egypt and effectively eliminate the Saudi's strongest Arab opponent.[17]

2. Foreign Policy since Sadat

When he succeeded Nasser, Anwar al-Sadat lacked the latter's popular legitimacy while his new regime found it increasingly difficult to retain the welfare commitments of Nasserist socialism. Indeed, to consolidate his own position, Sadat engineered the "Corrective Revolution" of 1971 by which he purged powerful Nasserist figures from state institutions, including the ruling Arab Socialist Union and the army. He enhanced his legitimacy at home by allying with the Arab oil states and waging war against Israel in October 1973.[18] One truly far-reaching result of that war was US diplomatic intervention that resolved Egypt's conflict with Israel. When Sadat accepted peace with Israel, his chief concerns were to recover the Egyptian territories occupied by Israel and obtain American financing for development.[19] The 1979 Camp David peace treaty, which Egypt signed with Israel, brought direct US aid and IMF loans to arrest Egypt's economic deterioration. By the resulting USA-Israel-Egypt alliance, however,

[13] Jesse Ferris. 2013. *Nasser's gamble: How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power*, Princeton University Press.
[14] Noor Ahmad Baba. 1992. "Nasser's Pan-Arab Radicalism and the Saudi Drive for Islamic Solidarity; a Response for Security," *India Quarterly*, 48 (1/2):1-22.
[15] Nadav Safran. 1988. *Saudi Arabia: the Ceaseless Quest for Security*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
[16] Gilles Kepel. 2005. *Jihad: the Trial of Political Islam*, translated by Anthony F. Roberts, London : I.B. Tauris: 51.
[17] Saad Eddin Ibrahim. Spring 1982. "An Islamic Alternative in Egypt: The Muslim Brotherhood and Sadat," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 4 (1/2): 75-93.
[18] Paul Rivlin. 1981. *The Liberalization of the Egyptian Economy: An Examination of the Decision-making Process*, Shiloah Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University.
[19] Ibrahim Karawan. May 1994. "Sadat and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Revisited," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 26 (2): 249-266.

economic aid for Egypt was not only conditional on peace with Israel but also economic privatization, essentially selling off public assets.[20]

For the USA, Arab-Israeli peace would, among others, minimize Soviet influence in the Middle East. As early as in July 1972, in fact, Sadat had expelled almost all of 20,000 Soviet military advisors in Egypt (although a year later Saudi Arabia granted Egypt $500 million for purchasing Soviet weapons).[21] As part of the alliance with the USA, Sadat terminated ties with the Soviet Union and actively opposed Soviet influence in the Middle East during the remaining Cold War period. Egypt's alliance with the USA strengthened after the fall of the anti-communist and pro-Western Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1979.

The alliance with the USA was Egypt's bridge to the international system and its main route of access to external resources. However, although Sadat placed economic survival ahead of nationalist ambitions in foreign policy, his formula of linking peace with prosperity failed to produce the latter. Civilian and military aid from the USA came with an open-door economic strategy of dismantling Nasser's state welfare and developmental policies in favor or privatization and the sale of public assets.[22] That economic strategy did not improve economic conditions for the majority of Egyptians. Instead, it burdened Egypt with high levels of debt, a widening income/wealth gap between rich and poor and the virtual elimination of its industrialization.

In terms of foreign policy, rapprochement with Israel and the USA left Egypt with little room to maneuver regionally and internationally. Egypt had to act as a force for stability against anti-Western radicalism and rally the Arabs to accept Israel.[23] Consequently, Egypt was isolated and boycotted by many Arab and Muslim states by the time Mubarak assumed power following Sadat's assassination in 1981. Therefore, Mubarak's first foreign policy challenge was to bring Egypt back to the Arab fold and restore relations with the major regional players. He balanced residual Nasserist nationalist policies and Sadat's close leanings to USA and Israel, recovering nationalist legitimacy without discarding Sadat's foreign policy.[24] By the end of the Iran-Iraq War, Egypt had restored full relations with Arab countries and the Arab League headquarters was returned to Cairo in 1990.

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[20] Heba Handoussa and Nemat Shafiq. 1993. "The Economics of Peace: the Egyptian Case," in Stanley Fischer, Dani Rodrik, and Elias Tuma (eds.), *The Economic of Middle East Peace*, Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press.
[21] Galia Golan. 1990. *Soviet Policies in the Middle East from World War Two to Gorbachev*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Yaacov Roi. 1975. *The USSR and Egypt in the Wake of Sadat's "July Decisions."* Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University.
[22] John Waterbury. 1983. *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of Two Regimes*, Princeton University Press.
[23] Banerji, A. K. January 1991. "Egypt under Mubarak: the Quest for Stability at Home and Normalization Abroad," Round Table, 317: 7-20.
[24] Jason Brownlee. 2007. *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, Cambridge University Press: 124-126.

During the 1990s, by normalizing its relations with the Arab world and serving as the main peace broker between the Israelis and the Arabs, Egypt received dramatically increased aid. Further, Egypt's reward for participating in the 1990-1991 Gulf War against Iraq was the cancellation of substantial portions of Egypt's debts to the IMF and the USA, its debts to Arab creditors and half of its debt to Paris Club members.[25] Egypt's support for the UN coalition against Iraq provided critical political cover for the US and might have lessened Arab and Muslim opposition to Western policies in the Middle East. Like Sadat, Mubarak wanted to make Egypt indispensable to US interests by promoting Egypt as a moderator and stabilizer of the Arab world. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of Islamophobia in the West after 9/11, Mubarak repositioned his regime as the defender of secularism in Egypt and the Arab world and a bulwark against "Islamist terrorism", the new enemy of the USA. Mubarak launched his own, domestic "war on terror" by suppressing the Muslim Brotherhood and other forms of opposition in the name of national security upheld by emergency and military courts.[26] Meanwhile, the USA eased its pressure for democratization in Egypt after its failure in Iraq, the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt's 2005 parliamentary elections, and the victory of Hamas in the first democratic elections in the Palestinian territories in 2006. It became clear that the US would not risk further regional destabilization by abandoning Mubarak to an Islamist takeover.

In the last years of Mubarak's 30-year rule, when crisis began to surround the matter of the succession to Mubarak, Egyptian foreign policy became increasingly dependent on the West and the Arab Gulf states. Widening rapprochement between Israel and Arab States compelled Egypt to find a new role in regional affairs. Egypt became more deeply integrated into the US strategy in the Middle East and more closely aligned with the Arab Gulf States. Egypt only played a supporting diplomatic role in negotiations between Hamas and Fateh, and between Hamas and Israel. Its "war on terror" allowed Egypt to be part of the pro-Western camp, which included Saudi Arabia and Jordan, that was opposed to an anti-West camp that included Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas. In practice, for example, Egypt supported Israel's wars against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Egyptian-Israeli relations peaked in December 2004 when the two countries signed a $2.5 billion preliminary agreement on the sale of Egyptian natural gas to Israel and the establishment of qualified industrial zones (QIZs) with Israel and the USA.[27]

The domestic political climate changed drastically, however, under the impact of regional events. The second Palestinian uprising in 2000 and the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 brought the return of street politics when thousands of Egyptians occupied Tahrir

[25] Galal Amin. 2011. *Egypt in the Era of Hosni Mubarak 1981-2011*, The American University in Cairo Press: 58.
[26] Jason Brownlee. October 2004. Democratization in the Arab World? The Decline of Pluralism in Mubarak's Egypt, *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (4): 6-14.
[27] Vikash Yadav. March 2007. "The Political Economy of the Egyptian-Israeli QIZ Trade Agreement," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 11 (1): 74-96.

Square, Cairo, for the first time in decades in 2003.[28] These two crises, the failure of Egypt and other Arab governments to prevent the American invasion of Iraq, and the growing economic difficulties prompted renewed challenge to the Mubarak regime which started a long process of activism and street protests that led to Egypt's "Revolution" on 25 January 2011.

Egypt's deepening relations with Israel went hand in hand with the rise of a new ruling class centered on the Mubarak family and especially Mubarak's son, Gamal. To the USA and Israel, as a matter of fact, Mubarak presented Gamal as the safest choice to preserve Egypt's deeply unpopular peace with Israel. Earnestly promoted as the face of new Egypt, Gamal made frequent and highly publicized state visits to Washington during which he participated in negotiations and strategic meetings. The USA tacitly approved Mubarak's succession ploy in May 2006 when Vice President Dick Cheney and National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley met Gamal at the White House during the latter's unofficial visit.[29] With US support and its strong leverage on the Egyptian military, Gamal himself sought support from the Egyptian military, the only institution that could guarantee a smooth and peaceful transition of power from father to son. In short, legitimizing the regime abroad became more important than legitimizing it at home.

Egypt after Mubarak

Two important aspects of the 2011 uprising and the political system maintained Egypt's foreign policy after Mubarak's ouster. First, the uprising was not about foreign policy but the Mubarak regime's failed domestic policy. Second, Mubarak's overthrow turned out to be little more than a change in the leadership of the regime as the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) replaced Mubarak by taking over the presidency.

Even so, the uprising held potential implications for foreign policy. The intense anti-Mubarak demonstrations often featured chants and songs that mockingly called on Mubarak to seek refuge in Tel Aviv,[30] evidence of popular anger that the regime did not serve Egypt's national interests but those of USA and Israel. After Mubarak was overthrown, various opposition groups launched violent protests outside the Israeli, American, and Saudi embassies in Cairo.[31] They demanded a more assertive foreign

[28] Schemm Paul. March 2003. "Egypt Struggles to Control Anti-War Protests," *Middle East Report Online (MERIP)* 31.
[29] Jason Brownlee. "The Heir Apparency of Gamal Mubarak," *Arab Studies Journal* (Fall 2007-Spring 2008): 36-56.
[30] *Alhayat*, 'Slogans of the Egyptian Revolution,' September 26, 2014:http://alhayat.com/Articles/4769345/شعارات-الثورة-المصرية-بصراحتها---وخفاياها
[31] 'Egyptians attack Israel embassy, ambassador evacuated,' *Reuters*, September 10, 2011; 'The storming of Cairo's Israeli embassy: an eyewitness account,' *Ahramonline*, September 10,

policy that would include the defense of Palestinians and Egyptian expatriates in the Gulf.[32] On their part, Israel and Saudi Arabia tried to rally international support for Mubarak. For the first time Israel allowed Egyptian battalions to be deployed in the demilitarized Sinai[33] while King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud denounced Egyptian protests as the work of "infiltrators" out to destabilize Egypt.[34] The latter was not only concerned that the overthrow of Mubarak would motivate other Arabs to rise against their regimes. By supporting Mubarak, Saudi Arabia wanted to maintain its close alliance with Egypt and the USA to contain the rising Iranian influence in the region since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 unseated Saddam Hussein. The USA did not advocate Mubarak's resignation; it only called for an "orderly transition" under the supervision of General Omar Suleiman, Mubarak's longtime intelligence chief and enforcer (whom Mubarak appointed vice president during the uprising) and Field Marshal Muhammad Husein Tantawi.[35] In other words, the USA urged military-led "change".

But continuity rather than change characterized Egypt's post-Mubarak foreign policy and international alliances. First, SCAF members who replaced Mubarak had for decades been the regime's guardians against internal and external threats, and caretakers of USA-Egypt relations and peace with Israel. Their interests remained intact when SCAF ruled Egypt during the transitional period and after their July 2013 coup against President Muhammad Morsi. Second, the forces that dominated the parliament and the presidency, that is, the non-revolutionary Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists, maintained an alliance with the military.[36] Third, the popular mobilization against the regime in 2011 had stopped short of dismantling state institutions and curbing the power of the military. In effect, the structure and distribution of power did not undergo significant change that might have altered the country's foreign policy.

3. Egyptian Foreign Policy under Muhammad Morsi (June 2012 - July 2013)

2011: http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/1/20856/Egypt/The-storming-of-Cairos-Israeli-embassy-an-eyewitne.aspx

[32] Khaled Elgindy, "Egypt, Israel, Palestine," *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, American University in Cairo:http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/CairoReview/Pages/articleDetails.aspx?aid=221#; Heba Saleh. 'Saudi Arabia closes Cairo embassy,' *Financial Times*, April 29, 2012.

[33] "Israel allows Egypt troops in Sinai for first time since 1979 peace treaty," Haaretz, January 31, 2011: http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/israel-allows-egypt-troops-in-sinai-for-first-time-since-1979-peace-treaty-1.340405

[34] Caryle Murphy. February 14, 2011, 'Fall of Mubarak deprives Saudi Arabia of closest local ally,' *The National*: http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/fall-of-mubarak-deprives-saudi-arabia-of-closest-local-ally

[35] 'Clinton Calls for 'Orderly Transition' in Egypt,' *New York Times*, January 30, 2011: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/31/world/middleeast/31diplo.html?_r=0

[36] Ibrahim El-Houdaiby. June 2014. "Changing Alliances and Continuous Oppression: The Rule of Egypt's Security Sector," *Arab Reform Initiative*: 1-29, available at: http://www.arab-reform.net/sites/default/files/Houdaiby_-_Egypt_Security_Sector_-_June_2014.pdf

The ascent of President Muhammad Morsi (in office from June 2012 to July 2013) tentatively marked a tripartite re-balancing of power – among the military (with its dominance over state institutions), the Muslim Brotherhood (with its well organized civil society institutions), and the broadly secular and liberal activists (with their ability to mobilize massive demonstrations). In spite of his Muslim Brotherhood affiliation, Morsi had not set out to impose an ideological reorientation on Egypt's foreign policy. He did express a need for new relations with the international community based on mutual respect and interest. For Egypt he sought a less explicitly pro-American role in the region but he assured traditional allies that Egypt would abide by its international treaties, the most important of which was to preserve the 1979 peace deal with Israel.[37]

There are four main reasons for Morsi's unchanged foreign policy. First, Egypt's foreign policy was motivated by its economic challenges and a dire need to attract foreign investments. In his inauguration speech, Morsi affirmed that Egypt had no intention to "export the revolution."[38] He assured the rulers of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries that Egypt's foreign policy recognized these states to be a crucial source of aid and investment and home to millions of Egyptian workers. Moreover, he gave assurances that his "Islamist" government would be moderate. By maintaining an active but unchanged foreign policy, Morsi wanted to compensate for the lack of a coherent vision for successful economic and social policies at home. Finally, the unrelenting and fierce opposition to Morsi's government and the idea of rule by the Muslim Brotherhood forced Morsi to resort to Mubarak-like use of foreign policy to serve narrow domestic political interests and reliance on the military and the police to counterbalance the revolutionary forces. In short, Morsi followed the practice of previous regimes of gaining foreign recognition to bolster domestic support.

In fact, domestic political concerns delayed Morsi's formulation of clear foreign policy. Besides, his ability to have a more assertive foreign policy was restricted by the lack of financial resources and his inability to control the military and other state institutions. In the wake of 2011 uprising, Egypt's foreign exchange reserves had been halved. With Egypt urgently requiring massive foreign financial aid, Morsi needed the USA and the IMF's financial support to achieve the economic recovery he had promised his electorate. Here, perhaps the most important institutional factor in keeping foreign policy unchanged was the SCAF's continuing control of state institutions, its ability to dictate the rules of domestic politics at home, and its concern to preserve its relationship with the USA and Israel in order to protect its interests and safeguard the flow of financial aid from the USA.

[37] 'Mohammed Morsi vows to respect Egypt-Israel peace treaty,' *The Telegraph*, August 28, 2012: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/egypt/9504601/Mohammed-Morsi-vows-to-respect-Egypt-Israel-peace-treaty.html

[38] 'UAE welcomes Egypt Morsi's pledge not to 'export' revolt,' *Daily Star*, July 3, 2012: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Jul-03/179236-uae-welcomes-egypt-morsis-pledge-not-to-export-revolt.ashx

Yet, some of Morsi's diplomatic gestures did not reassure his doubters. He became the first Egyptian president, since Sadat broke diplomatic relations with Iran in the 1980s, to visit Tehran when he attended the Non-Aligned Movement meetings in August 2012. There, Morsi called for the creation of a regional group consisting of Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt to mediate an end to the Syrian conflict.[39] In February 2013, President Ahmadinejad of Iran visited Egypt. A month later, the two countries had their first commercial flight in three decades. While Morsi attempted to mend Egypt's relations with Iran, the latter saw the Muslim Brotherhood as a potential Sunni ally against the Saudis. Iran's supreme religious leader, Ali Khamenei, had previously declared the uprising against Mubarak as an "Islamic Awakening" across the region. He called Mubarak's overthrow a defeat for Western-backed governments and a victory for Islamists who were inspired by Iran's Islamic revolution. But Egypt's resumption of full diplomatic relations with Iran was hampered by Saudi aversion towards Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood, and additionally blocked by Egypt's security apparatus and the Salafists.[40] It was made clear to Egypt that closer ties with Iran would jeopardies economic aid from the Gulf countries. The USA was itself alarmed in another way. The USA was already unhappy with expanding Egypt-China trade relations, marked by Morsi's early diplomatic visit to China and his attempt to join the BRICS groupings.[41] Now the USA feared that the rapprochement with Iran presaged a long-term shift in Egypt's foreign policy at a time of heightened tension between the USA and Iran over Iran's nuclear program.

If Morsi's attempt to maintain good relations with Saudi Arabia were met with Saudi distrust of the Muslim Brotherhood, his efforts to improve ties with Qatar – a rival of the Saudis – were more successful because of Qatar's preference for the Muslim Brotherhood. Qatar poured $8 billion of financial support into Egypt during Morsi's government, gave Egypt a favorable gas deal to alleviate power shortages and prepared plans to invest $18 billion in Egypt over five years.[42] Moreover, the Qatari television channel Al Jazeera crucially supported Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. By using the Egyptian Islamists, Qatar aimed to promote its interests, bolster the emirate's domestic and regional legitimacy and protect itself from Saudi Arabia. A long-standing rivalry with Saudi Arabia and its proximity to Iran compelled Qatar to embark on an independent foreign policy in order to manage its ties with various regional actors.[43] While enjoying unparalleled US military protection and internal stability, Qatar wanted to influence the "new" post-Arab Spring Middle East and obtain security and

[39] 'Egyptian Leader Adds Rivals of West to Syria Plan,' *New York Times*, August 26, 2012.
[40] 'Egypt halts tourism with Iran, cites security concern,' *Ahramonline*, October 1, 2013; *Al-Shorouk* April 1, 2013: http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=01042013&id=05616c49-1e4e-4e8a-a65b-e6231938d7d1
[41] 'Egypt's outreach to China and Iran is troubling for U.S. policy,' *New York Times*, August 24, 2012; "Egypt could join BRICS countries to form E-BRICS: President Morsi, *Ahramonline*, March 18, 2013, available at: http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/67158/Business/Economy/Egypt-could-join-BRICS-countries-to-form-EBRICS-Pr.aspx
[42] Kristian Coates Ulrichsen. September 2014."Qatar and the Arab Spring: Policy Drivers and Regional Implications,"*Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*.
[43] Mehran Kamrava. 2013. *Qatar: Small State, Big Politics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 88.

independence from the Saudis[44] for whom the Brotherhood's Islamist model combined the passion of religion with the power of the ballot box; there was also the threat to posed by the potential Brotherhood appeal to the Saudi population and in the region.[45] In addition, Qatar's aid to the Muslim Brotherhood was believed to have resonated favorably across much of the Middle East and perhaps permitted Qatar a role in emerging popular revolts.[46] It was apparently a principal objective of Qatari foreign policy to be able to assume leading positions in mediating various regional problems and conflicts.[47] Qatar has aimed to represent itself as an independent and progressive regional and international actor that is valuable to the region and the world.

Morsi also strengthened ties with Turkey's pan-Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) government which saw the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt as a potential strategic partner to advance Turkey's influence in the Middle East. More than the rise of nationalism in any country or pan-Arab nationalism, the dominance of Islamic nationalism after the collapse of Arab authoritarian regimes would give Turkey much influence in a region united "under Islam". Hence, Turkey supported the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Tunisia, Palestine and other Islamist groups in Syria. Turkey's President Abdullah Gul was the first statesman to visit Egypt after Morsi was elected president. The embrace of the Brotherhood by Qatar and Turkey implied their further cooperation on many regional issues and aid for Morsi's government to build a regional camp independent of Saudi Arabia. With a privileged relationship with Turkey, Morsi would construct an alliance with democratic Islamists that could form a potential new regional order to counter the Saudi threat and its influence over the Egyptian Salafists such as al-Nour Party which drew support from wealthy Salafis in the Gulf and were the Brotherhood's main political and ideological rival. Morsi and Erdogan could also use their common positions on the Syrian conflict and support for Hamas to strengthen their positions within their respective political movements and against their opponents.

Morsi's regional foreign policy initiatives were not enough to give him the upper hand over his domestic opponents in the streets and state institutions until he achieved a diplomatic success in brokering a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel in November 2012 that was highly praised by the Obama administrations and Tel Aviv. With that success in bringing stability to a volatile region, Morsi proved himself to be a pragmatist not an ideologue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indeed Israel's Deputy Prime

[44] "Behind Qatar's bet on the Muslim Brotherhood," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 18, 2014; Rene Rieger. 2014. "In Search of Stability: Saudi Arabia and the Arab Spring," *GRM Papers*, Gulf Research Center: 1-21.
[45] "Saudi Arabia Pleased with Morsi's Fall," *Almonitor*, July 4, 2013.
[46] Lina Khatib. 2013. "Qatar's Foreign Policy: the Limits of Pragmatism," *International Affairs* 89 (2): 417-431.
[47] Such as between the Palestinian political factions, peace efforts in Sudan's Darfur, attempts to facilitate talks between Afghanistan's Taliban and the Afghani government, and the release of hostages by Islamist fighters in Syria in March 2014.

Minister Dan Meridor stated that the ceasefire had created a new bond between Israel and Egypt's new government.[48]

It was after emerging as a major regional player who had won the trust of the USA and Israel that Morsi countered domestic threats to his position. In November 2013, he granted himself sweeping powers by passing unilateral constitutional declarations that gave all presidential decisions immunity from legal challenges and judicial review. He also sacked the chief prosecutor, Abdel Maguid Mahmoud, a Mubarak holdover, and announced that there would be retrials of failed prosecutions of those suspected of ordering or committing violence against the protestors of 2011.[49] Morsi's move backfired. It alienated non-Islamist forces which continued their challenge through renewed street mobilization that would eventually be the military's pretext for staging its coup. After the coup, Egypt's Prosecutor-General accused Morsi and his top aides of espionage and sharing state secrets with Iran and of spying on Egypt for Hamas and Hezbollah.[50]

4. Sisi's Foreign Policy

Sisi's *coup d'état* came after massive anti-government demonstrations were held on June 30, the anniversary of Morsi's presidential inauguration, and calls for early presidential elections. Sisi suspended the Constitution, installed an interim government and appointed Adly Mansour, the head of Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court, as the interim President (for the duration of 3 July 2013 to 8 June 2014). On June 8, 2014, Sisi became president following a landslide election victory.

Apart from everything else, the 2013 coup restored "Mubarakism" in Egypt's foreign policy, especially with a dramatic improvement in relations with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and a drastic deterioration in ties with Qatar. This diplomatic development was accompanied by Egypt's deepening economic dependence on Saudi Arabia and UAE. Whereas previous Egyptian regimes were able to maintain a stance of equality vis-à-vis Saudi Arabia, Sisi's regime now worked in the regional orbit of the Saudis who had become more assertive as regional states became somewhat wary of US capacity and unpredictability in the wake of the latter's response to the events of the Arab Spring.[51]

Sisi's dependence on Saudi Arabia and UAE has prevented any reconciliation with the Muslim Brotherhood. The military has resumed its "war on terror", seeking to combat Islamism at home – by eradicating the Muslim Brotherhood by force – and

[48] 'Meridor: Cease-fire may create new bond with Egypt,' *The Jerusalem Post*, November 25, 2012.
[49] *Al-Shorouk* December 9, 2012; 'Egypt judges denounce Morsi maneuver, threaten strike,' *New York Times*, November 25, 2012.
[50] 'Egypt's Mohamed Morsi accused of espionage, plotting Islamist takeover,' *The Washington Post*, December 18, 2013.
[51] F. Gregory Gause III. December 2011. "Saudi Arabia in the New Middle East," Council Special Report No. 63, *Council on Foreign Relations, Center for Preventive Action*.

abroad. Sisi's reliance on Saudi also prevents Egypt from having an independent foreign policy that could contradict the Saudi's regional agenda. For instance, Sisi's regime adopts anti-Hamas policies that purportedly link Hamas to Egypt's insecurity and instability. Furthermore, Egypt sought more help from the USA and Israel by demonstrating its subaltern usefulness in destroying the Sinai-Gaza tunnels and enforcing Gaza's wider isolation. During the last war between Hamas and Israeli in August 2014, the Egyptian government prolonged the conflict in Gaza by using the talks as part of its war against the Muslim Brotherhood.[52] Sisi's government views Hamas to be identical to the enemy they are fighting at home. Previous regimes had linked Egypt's national security interests to mediating between Hamas and Israel. Sisi's policy towards Gaza has entangled his domestic and international agenda in regional alignments with Saudi Arabia and UAE who view Hamas as an offshoot of the Brotherhood that threatens not only Israel, but them. Steven Cook noted that "given the intense anti-Muslim Brotherhood and anti-Hamas propaganda to which Egyptians have been subjected and upon which Sisi's legitimacy in part rests, the violence in Gaza serves both his political interests and his overall goals."[53]

Sisi hopes to use his strong alignment with the Arab Gulf states to pressure the USA and other Western powers to embrace his regime fully. On their part, the Arab Gulf states have invested heavily in Sisi's regime and given Egypt large amounts of loans and subsidies and advocated the acceptance of Sisi's government around the world. However, Egypt did not indulge in Saudi's promotion of anti-Shia agenda in the region. Sisi's main concern is stability more than confrontation with Iran. And Egypt has to prove to the USA that it can help to stabilize regional order rather than be involved in regional wars or become a proxy for regional players.

Presently, Egypt offers security cooperation in the Middle East, being aware that its dependence on the Arab Gulf states cannot go on forever. The Gulf States have funded mega projects in Egypt but these would not necessarily set the economy right.[54] Aid from the Gulf is expected to sustain Egypt's economy for months only. Together with other Gulf States Saudi Arabia sent a clear message that their aid to Egypt cannot go on forever.[55] Egypt requires aid and loans from the international financial institutions such as World Bank and IMF and realizes that it can receive such only with US support.[56]

But the regime's overall approach to the economy is mired in deep problems. Egypt has a statist economy with little encouragement of the private sector that could

[52] Michele Dunne, Nathan J. Brown. August 18, 2014. "How Egypt Prolonged the Gaza War," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*.
[53] Steven Cook. July 21, 2014. "The Last Great Myth about Egypt," *Foreign Policy*, available at: http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/07/21/the-last-great-myth-about-egypt/
[54] Angela Boskovitch. September 9, 2014. "Photo Essay: Worshiping the Egyptian State,"*Sada, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.*
[55] 'Al-Faisal warns: Saudi Arabia will not support Egypt forever,' *Middle East Monitor*, September 4, 2013.
[56] Hamed El-Said. 2006. "The Economic and Political Determinants of IMF and World Bank Lending in the Middle East and North Africa," *World Development*, 34 (2): 247-270.

create jobs for its large number of unemployed youth.[57] Sisi has long military experience but not an economic strategy to generate large-scale employment. Without an overhaul of economic conditions, how would Sisi be able to control Egypt to the point of excluding normal political life?

Domestic Strategy

As a matter of fact, Sisi's foreign policy of regime consolidation goes together with the outright repression of domestic opposition, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood, while the armed forces are repositioned as guardians preventing internal and external actors from 'working to undermine the Egyptian state.' For its survival, the regime has to demonstrate that its main goal is to protect Egyptian borders and sovereignty. The securitization of domestic political discourse has been a tool for regime consolidation, largely helped by Egypt's state and private media that enhanced the military's message that Islamists are terrorists.[58] Before its crackdown on Morsi's supporters in August 2013, Sisi called on Egyptians to take to the streets and public squares across the country to authorize the army to "confront violence and terrorism." By mid-September 2013 the Sisi regime had banned the Muslim Brotherhood, taken over its schools, clinics and social welfare institutions. In December the Muslim Brotherhood was declared a terrorist group.[59]

Since September 2013, the Jihadist group, Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis, who had hitherto operated against the military in Sinai or crossed the border into Israel, started to attack mostly police and military targets in Egypt.[60] Yet the regime chose to blame those attacks on the Muslim Brotherhood.[61] Moreover, Sisi has portrayed the war against the militant Jihadists as a fight against an internal and external conspiracy to divide and draw Egypt into civil war.[62] The regime has used such reasoning to silence critics and force them to barter political freedom for stability and security. It has sought

[57] "Arab Republic of Egypt - More jobs, better jobs : a priority for Egypt," *The World Bank*, June 24, available at: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2014/10/24/000350881_20141024080250/Rendered/PDF/884470EG0repla00Box385343B00PUBLIC0.pdf ; Amr Adly. June 2014. "The Economics of Egypt's Rising Authrotiairan Order," *Carnegie Middle East Center,* available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/econ_egypt_authoritarian_order.pdf

[58] 'Egypt's Media Cheers on Army Crackdown,' *New York Times*, August 19, 2013.

[59] *Al-Ahram*, April 11, 2014, available at: http://www.ahram.org.eg/News/11150/25/276900/إرهابية-منظمة-الإخوان-رسميا-تحسمها-الحكومة/الأولى.aspx

[60] 'After joining IS, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis expands in Egypt,' *Almonitor*, December 1, 2014, available at: http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/egypt-ansar-maqdis-sinai-spread.html

[61] 'Egypt blames Muslim Brotherhood for attack on army bus in Cairo,' *The National*, March 14, 2014, available at: http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/egypt-blames-muslim-brotherhood-for-attack-on-army-bus-in-cairo

[62] 'A transcript of AP interview with Egypt's el-Sissi,' September 20, 2014, *Associated Press*, available at http://bigstory.ap.org/article/981e0b0ddd1040fdb6625e4040282253/transcript-ap-interview-egypts-el-sissi

to quash fears and conceal the defections of a number of military officers to radical groups. Some Egyptian media have reported that the October 24, 2014 attacks against military checkpoints in Sinai, which killed 31 Egyptian soldiers, were planned and executed by two former army officers, Emad Abdel al-Halim and Hesham Ashmawy.[63] In fact, most Egyptians do not know or understand the war against the Jihadists in Sinai, but the military insists that the militants are an extension of former Brotherhood members. For that matter, the military is not preoccupied with winning the war but using conflicts to create perceptions of instability, lower mass socioeconomic expectations, maintain external support, curb internal opposition, and justify the securitization of society. This strategy was already evident in Sisi's own electoral campaign. He did not promise anything better, only talked about how bad things were in Egypt. He said that the state had little to offer to Egyptians but asked them instead to work harder and contribute to the country as its situation was dire on many fronts.

Constantly using his slogan, "Egypt will not fall", Sisi warned Egyptians of the fate of neighboring countries that fell to civil wars.[64] The broader regional context that was scarred by sectarian and civil conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya lent a semblance of legitimacy to such discourse. As such, the regime is emboldened to rule with coercion with little intention to be accommodating towards the opposition. Moreover, the Brotherhood's continued refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Sisi and its ability to mobilize supporters onto the streets justify the latter's constant repression of the Brotherhood and opposition at large. While targeting the Muslim Brotherhood, the regime has repressed secular opposition as well with the systematic suppression of protests, arrests of the icons of the 2011 revolution, massive rights abuses, and mass killing. The government instituted a new Protest Law which severely curbs protest.[65] Had such a law been in force under Morsi, the mass protests against his government up to the 2013 coup would have been illegal.

The reinforcement of a state of fear with nationalist discourse has allowed the regime to take the bold decisions of cutting energy and food subsidies which previous presidents did not dare to adopt. Getting Egyptians to endure their present suffering with patience has been facilitated by what Emad Shahin calls "neoliberal militarism" which assigns stronger military intervention in economic decision-making and management.[66] Here, what distinguishes Sisi's regime from Mubarak's is the increasing allocation of economic projects to the military and presence of military generals in

[63] Khalil al-Anani. December 4, 2014. "ISIS Enters Egypt," *Foreign Affairs*, available at: http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/142423/khalil-al-anani/isis-enters-egypt

[64] *Almesryoon*, October 25, 2014, Sisi: thea armed forces are targeted and Egypt will not fall (in Arabic), available at: http://almesryoon.com/الوطن-أحوال-دفتر/582231-مستهدفة-المسلحة-القوات-السيسي-تسقط-لن-ومصر

[65] 'Egypt: New protest law gives security forces free rein,' *Amnesty International*, November 25, 2013, available at http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/egypt-new-protest-law-gives-security-forces-free-rein-2013-11-25

[66] Emad El-Din Shahin. 4 September 2014. "Lessons Not Learned: Trading Democracy for 'Neoliberal Militarism' in Egypt," http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2014/09/2014946275380514.htm

ministries with oversight authority over other ministries. Consequently, non-military state institutions lapse into steady decay vis-à-vis the military. The Egyptian constitution enshrines the supremacy of the military by placing it beyond the control of the executive branch or the "civilian presidency." One cannot but recall Egypt under Nasser of military rule. The critical difference is, the present state is inherently based on neoliberal capitalism and "repressive-exclusionary modes of governance"[67] without the Nasserist aim to restructure the economic system for social mobility or re-distribution.

Another important internal element of regime consolidation is Sisi's exaggerated nationalist rhetoric regarding Egypt's recent history and role in the Arab world. To some extent, Sisi has evinced anti-Western tones with explicit anti-Islamist overtones, resorting to Nasser's key messages of nationalism, skepticism of western intentions, Arab dignity, and strong leadership as being essential to saving Egypt from the chaos of the 2011 revolution. Sometimes the Egyptian regime and media would even accuse the USA of supporting the Muslim Brotherhood to erode Egypt's stability.[68] Undermining the Muslim Brotherhood in this manner the regime has tried to garner support for reinstituting personalized military rule.

External Strategy

Like Morsi, Sisi adopted an active foreign policy driven by domestic opposition to his rule. Sisi has realigned Egypt with the stable Arab monarchies that face similar challenges from the Arab Spring and political Islam represented by an ascendant Muslim Brotherhood. In particular, Sisi's regime needed a strong alliance with Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait to counteract the Muslim Brotherhood's regional supporters. The Egypt-Saudi alignment exerts pressure and threatens isolation on Turkey, Qatar and Hamas (a non-state actor seen by Riyadh, Cairo and Abu Dhabi to be an extension to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood)

Saudi Arabia's significant support for Sisi has two objectives, namely, to establish Egypt as a bulwark against political Islam and the Brotherhood in particular, and to curtail Iranian influence which is considerable in Syria and Iraq, and Lebanon, countries that constitute Saudi Arabia's "backyard" and in Yemen where Saudi Arabia believes that the recent Houthi expansion is backed by Iran. In this regard, Iranian support for Assad is the flip side of Saudi Arabian support for Sisi: each has the aim of creating a strong barrier to the inflow of external influence, including that of Turkey and Qatar. Since Egypt, the most populous country with the largest army in the Arab world, can serve as a strong Sunni deterrent against Iranian influence, the Saudis have

[67] Steven Heydemann. December 4, 2014. "Arab Autocrats are not Going Back to the Future," *The Washington Post*, available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/12/04/arab-autocrats-are-not-going-back-to-the-future/

[68] Middle East Monitor, August 25, 2014: https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/africa/13710-sisi-says-qatar-turkey-us-and-the-muslim-brotherhood-are-funding-media-projects-to-undermine-egypts-stability

provided billions of dollars in financial aid to Sisi and financed arm deals between Cairo and Moscow. The Saudis believe that the Egyptian army can be deployed to protect Saudi borders from incursions by extremist groups and the potential for both countries to coordinate a joint military intervention in the Yemeni conflict. On many occasions, Sisi stressed that Gulf security was an integral part of Egypt's own security and indicated his readiness to commit Egyptian troops to defend the Gulf and Arab security.[69]

Given Qatar's increasing rivalry with Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait, Sisi saw an opportunity to weaken and isolate Qatar. In protest at Qatar's policies, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain withdrew their ambassadors from Doha in March 2014. Owing to Saudi pressure, some Egyptian Brotherhood leaders had to leave Doha in September 2014 while the Qatari al-Jazeera news networks shut down its Egypt Direct (Al-Jazeera Mubasher) TV channel in December 2014 after Qatar reached a reconciliation agreement with Saudi Arabia and UAE. Later, and in the presence of a Saudi official, Sisi met with a representative from the Qatari government for the first time since he became president.

Turkey emerged as the fiercest international critic of the overthrow of Morsi which damaged its relations with Saudi Arabia.[70] The relations between Turkey and Egypt deteriorated following the killing of hundreds of Morsi's supporters in Cairo's Rabaa al-Adawiya and Nahda squares in August 2013. Turkey recalled its ambassador from Cairo and the Turkish Prime Minister called for the United Nations Security Council to convene for an urgent response to what he described as a massacre.[71] Turkey refused to recognize the government set up after the 2013 coup, insisting that Morsi remained the legitimate president. In November 2013, Egypt expelled the Turkish ambassador and downgraded ties with Turkey to the level of *charge d'affaires*.

Erdogan's support for the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world has two important motives. First, Erdogan's Islamist supporters continue to admire Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.[72] Second, Erdogan's recent policies of depoliticizing the Turkish military to protect his rule from military coup, necessitates a strong stance against any military coup against an elected government.[73] Turkey's anti-coup foreign policy indicates that mending relations with Egypt will not be possible in the near future.

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[69] Al-Arabiya, 20 May 2014: http://www.alarabiya.net/ar/arab-and-world/egypt/2014/05/20/السكة-مسافة-والخليجي-العربي-أمن-حماية-السيسي-.html

[70] Madawi al-Rashid. August 20, 2013. "Saudi Arabia and Turkey Falter Over Egypt," *Almonitor*, available at: http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/08/saudi-arabia-turkey-strained-relations.html

[71] 'Turkish PM calls for U.N. Security Council to convene on Egypt,' Reuters, August 15, 2013, available at: http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/15/us-egypt-protests-turkey-idUSBRE97E0C520130815

[72] Senem Aydın-Düzgit. July 24, 2014. "The Seesaw Friendship Between Turkey's AKP and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood," available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/07/24/seesaw-friendship-between-turkey-s-akp-and-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood

[73] Soner Cagaptay. "Erdogan's Empathy for Morsi," September 2014, *The Washington Institute*: http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/erdogans-empathy-for-morsi

This has made Turkey home to Egyptian and mainly Brotherhood opposition which is assured of continued support from Turkey.

Sisi has sought to neutralize Turkey's threat with anti-Turkey alliances in the Middle East and beyond. He hosted a meeting in Cairo that was attended by the Cyprus leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and Greek Prime Minister Antonio Samaras. A new energy cooperation deal was announced between Egypt, Greece and Greek Cyprus. The deal challenges Turkey's claim on gas deposits in areas of east Mediterranean that are claimed by Cyprus. And in a joint "Cairo Declaration", the three countries called on Turkey to respect the "sovereignty of Cyprus over its exclusive economic zone."[74] Although Turkey joined the anti-Assad forces in Syria, Turkey's support has been seen by Saudi Arabia and UAE as support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria. Through "losing" Egypt, Turkey has become rather isolated, suffering more difficult relations with Baghdad, Damascus, Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and, of course Jerusalem, not to mention being at odds with Tehran over Syria and Iraq.

Egypt made sure to draw closer to Israel whose own relations with Turkey have become more strained after Erdogan claimed that Israel was behind the military takeover in Egypt.[75] Israeli recognition of the authority set up after Morsi's ouster was a way to preempt the US from officially announcing that the military takeover was a coup, which would have terminated or disrupted US military aid to Egypt. Israel was a staunch defender of Sisi's regime and opposed any reduction of aid from the US to Egypt. Likewise, Israel's praise for the Egyptian security operations against Jihadists secured further acceptance of Sisi by the USA. In fact, Israel benefited from the activities of the Egyptian armed forces in the Sinai, which provided a buffer zone for Israeli border security. Hence, Israel allowed the Egyptian military to operate in zone (C) of Sinai, for the first time since 1967, although the peace treaty prohibits in principle any Egyptian military presence in the area. Sisi has said that, "Israel knows that the lack of presence of the Egyptian military in Sinai poses a danger to it even more than it does to Egypt."[76]

Normalizing relations with the USA has been supremely important to Sisi's regime. While it reluctantly accepted the overthrow of Mubarak, the USA kept silent on the coup against Morsi, pretending that there was no coup because there was still a civilian government.[77] The big demonstrations against Morsi and the subsequent repression of the Muslim Brotherhood were shrugged off as acts of restoring democracy. Sisi's government gained official recognition from the USA and Western powers when Sisi headed an Egyptian delegation to the United Nations. Before the UN General

[74] 'Oil reserves in the Mediterranean open new front between Cairo and Ankara,' *Alakhbar*, November 12, 2014, available at: http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/22437
[75] "Israel behind coup to oust Morsi, Turkish PM Erdoğan says," *Hurriyet Daily News*, August 20, 2013: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/israel-behind-coup-to-oust-morsi-turkish-pm-erdogan-says.aspx?PageID=238&NID=52876&NewsCatID=338
[76] YnetNews, May 20, 2014: http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4521754,00.html
[77] "Kerry Says Egypt's Military Was 'Restoring Democracy' in Ousting Morsi," *The New York Times*, August 1, 2013: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/02/world/middleeast/egypt-warns-morsi-supporters-to-end-protests.html

Assembly Sisi spoke of building an alliance to combat the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). Sisi's regime appeared to have received discreet support for his "roadmap" for ridding Egypt of "terrorism". At the UN General Assembly, Sisi referred to Egypt's experience with terrorism since the 1920s (with the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928) and the alleged "bloody sectarianism" to which the Muslim Brotherhood and their allies were driving the country.[78] Exploiting the rise of ISIS and being well aware of the US need of the participation of the regional states in a military alliance against ISIS, Sisi pledged support for the US war against the Islamic State. At the same time, he called on President Obama to expand his campaign against extremism well beyond Iraq and Syria.

Behind such maneuvers, Egypt's has tried to get closer to Russia in hopes of obtaining arms and wheat from Russia, itself under Western sanctions, in need of non-European markets elsewhere and strongly supportive of Sisi's "war on terror".[79] Egypt's overture to Russia seeks to impress upon USA and the Western powers that flexibility rather than pressure would be more effective in managing their relations with Sisi's regime. This was evident when Sisi met Obama to discuss the establishment of security and political coordination between the USA and Egypt. In welcoming Sisi to the USA for "our first opportunity face-to-face to discuss a wide range of issues -- everything from the Palestinian-Israeli situation in Gaza, to Libya, to the issues of ISIS, Iraq and Syria"[80], Obama described Egypt as "an important cornerstone of our security policy and our policy in the Middle East for a very long time."

The Egyptian regime knew that the USA would not pressure Egypt because ultimately they need Egypt in the region. Egypt's ruling elites are sure that the US military aid will not be cut because the core USA-Egypt relationship is a military one.[81] They also regard the $1.3 billion dollar military aid as a US investment crucial to US geopolitical interests in the Middle East. Both sides accept that unless the military retains power, Egypt would be unstable and could descend into a civil war as in Libya and Syria – a position that conveniently sanctions domestic repression, authoritarianism and human rights abuses.

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[78] 'Sisi talks counterterrorism at UN Security Council,' *Mada Masr*, September 24, 2014, available at: http://www.madamasr.com/news/sisi-talks-counter-terrorism-un-general-assembly

[79] 'Egypt and Russia, a new phase of cooperation,' August 13, 2014, Egypt's *State Information Service*, available at: http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticleNews.aspx?ArtID=79206#.VLPiAMYVfzI

[80] Barak Obama, "Remarks by President Obama Before Bilateral Meeting with President el-SiSi of Egypt," *The White House*: http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/25/remarks-president-obama-bilateral-meeting-president-el-sisi-egypt

[81] Armin Rosen. 'The U.S. and Egypt Sure Look Like Allies, at Least on Military Matters,' *The Atlantic*, September 14, 2012. Available at: http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/09/the-us-and-egypt-sure-look-like-allies-at-least-on-military-matters/262411/

Conclusion

In Egypt and the Arab world more broadly, foreign policy is the policy of the ruling elite because "state" and "regime" are effectively conflated with the ruling elite. In a sense, the foreign policy of Egypt does not reflect its political and geostrategic weight in the region. Far from leading any regional alliance, Egypt has accepted a subordinate position within existing regional networks. Since the Arab Spring, four regional alliances have emerged – Saudi Arabia and its allies; Qatar-Turkey and their allies, Iran and its allies, and the Salafi Jihadists such ISIS and Al-Qaeda and their alliances. The Saudi and Iranian groupings, two strong oil powers in the Muslim world, are strongest and they compete for dominance in the region.

In contrast, post-2011 Egypt could no longer lead any initiative towards regional stabilization, which was the cornerstone of Egypt's foreign policy under Sadat and Mubarak. After the 2011 uprising and the subsequent turmoil, Egypt remains a crucial supporter of US regional interests, offering the US flyover rights, counter terrorism intelligence, and unrivalled access to the Suez Canal. After the coup of 2013, Sisi's regime has tried to show that stability has returned to the country. But, faced with a security challenge from home-gown militant groups, the Islamic State group's affiliate Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, the same socioeconomic crises that led to Mubarak's ouster, and aware of the importance of the economy to stability the regime has tried hard to revitalize the national economy by opening it to Egyptian and foreign investors and bringing tourists back to the country. Yet Egypt's economic crisis has deepened its dependence on external powers and increased its vulnerability by being integrated with the interests of the Gulf monarchies, Israel and the West.

Sisi wants to consolidate his rule without political inclusion and meaningful opposition. He has used the absence of an elected parliament to unilaterally issue a series of decrees that severely restrict the freedoms of expression, association and assembly.[82] However, escalating the repression of domestic opposition could test US-Egypt relations, not out of moral principles but because excessive repression could fuel radicalization and instability which discourage foreign aid and investment. For the time being, Sisi has tried to hedge his bets by promoting closer ties with Russia and China such as the formation of the Egyptian Chinese Business Council[83] and relying on Saudi Arabia and the UAE for financial and political support.

Moreover, Sisi's reliance on regional alignments that may swiftly change makes his regime's survival dependent on the stability and survival of the Gulf regimes. Since the Arab Spring, many states of the region, as Yazid Sayigh correctly notes, face many kinds of challenges, including unsettled border legitimacy, unstable domestic power structures, cross-border threats, long-term socioeconomic transformation, and shifting

[82] "2014: The Sisification of Egypt," Daily News Egypt, December 30, 2014: http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/12/30/2014-sisification-egypt/

[83] "Egypt-China business council to launch investments in Egypt worth $250mn," *Egypt Independent*, December 17, 2014, available at: http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/egypt-china-business-council-launch-investments-egypt-worth-250mn

regional alignments.[84] Although located in the center of the Middle East, Egypt is becoming "semi-isolated" where "proximate powers such as Libya, Qatar, Sudan, Hamas – and, in the wider region, Turkey, Iran and Ethiopia – are not allies."[85]

Deepening economic dependency means that a major function of foreign policy must be to secure resource flows from external powers. That makes Egypt more responsive to external demands than to domestic opinion and endangers its national interests. Further dependence on the Gulf States, the USA and Israel would most likely erode popular support for Sisi as his rule is likened to that of Mubarak's, perhaps worse as thousands have been killed and arbitrarily arrested. Since Sadat's time, it has been a steady decline for Egypt's regional strength. Between the 1979 peace treaty with Israel and the present reliance on the Gulf States, Egypt has less and less scope to maneuver regionally and internationally. It would be ironic if by being closely tied to US interests and influence, Egypt's role shrinks further as American influence started to diminish after the Arab Spring.

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[84] Yazid Sayigh. "The Arab Region at Tipping Point," August 21, 2014, *Carnegie Middle East Center*: http://carnegie-mec.org/2014/08/21/arab-region-at-tipping-point
[85] Nael M Shama. "The Dilemmas of Egyptian Foreign Policy," June 11, 2014, *Ahramonline*: http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/4/0/102649/Opinion/--The-dilemmas-of-Egyptian-foreign-policy.aspx